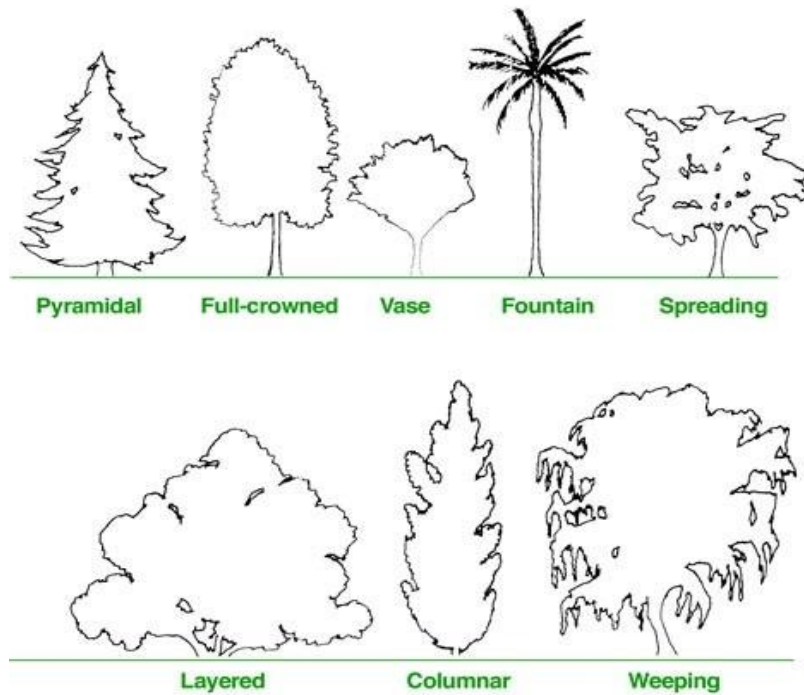


Planning for the Right Tree

Balancing site conditions with personal preferences

Last time we talked about the function that trees can provide in the landscape, and how the form can compliment the function to reduce maintenance costs and increase the value of your property. When making a selection about the form you prefer, also consider mature tree size. Trees grow in a variety of shapes, and can vary in height from a few feet to over a hundred feet, like palm trees that are cute when they're small. Columnar shapes are good for screening, small spreading trees in a location under utility lines, and vase-shaped forms create an arbor over a street or driveway.



Selecting a tree that will thrive in a given set of **site conditions** is the key to long-term tree survival.

- ✓ In urban settings the **topsoil** has often been disturbed and frequently is shallow, compacted and subject to drought. Some garden centers are a good resource for testing a sample of soil from your yard for fertility and pH.
- ✓ Most woody plants require **full sunlight** for proper growth, and **protection from the wind** by staking to help them establish strong trunks and root systems. Staked trees should be able to move rather than being held too rigid, but they do need support until the roots take hold.
- ✓ Tree roots require **oxygen** to develop and thrive, and poor drainage causes water to fill up the air spaces forcing out the oxygen.
- ✓ **Hardiness** is the tree's ability to survive in the climate conditions of a particular geographic area. Trees can be tolerant to drought, heat, alkaline soil, and even recycled water. Most plant reference books provide information on species hardiness.

Personal preferences play a major role in the tree selection process. Make sure you utilize the information you have gathered about your site conditions, and balance them with the aesthetic decisions you make related to your personal preferences.

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